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Chairman: Mrs. Aase LIONAES (Norway).

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. López (Philippines), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 12

Report of the Economic and Social Council (chapters VI and VII) (A/3613, A/C.3/L.609, A/C.3/L.610) (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. RAMOS (Argentina) was concerned to note that the gap between the undeveloped countries in per caput income was widening from year to year. That problem was serious because the increasing inequality in levels of living might give rise to social upheavals dangerous to world peace. The Report on the World Social Situation (E/CN.5/324/Rev.1) however had thrown light on some of the causes of that state of affairs, such as the slow expansion of agriculture compared to industry and the rapid increase of population in the under-developed countries with consequent difficulties in production, housing and social services.

2. Social and economic progress was retarded by demographic problems. That of urbanization was particularly acute, and the Argentine delegation was pleased that the Secretariat had decided to devote part of its efforts to its solution.

3. With respect to international control of narcotics, it must be emphasized that drug addiction was a vice known in every country, regardless of its stage of development. Accordingly, each Government must intensify its struggle against that evil. The Argentine delegation warmly congratulated the Government of Iran on its courageous decision to ban the production of the opium poppy.

4. He was gratified to note that discrimination against women was gradually disappearing. Several of the resolutions adopted by the Economic and Social Council during its twenty-fourth session, especially those which dealt with the access of women to education and economic opportunities for women, would serve to accentuate that trend.

5. Mr. TEJERA (Uruguay) considered that the report constituted a remarkable survey of the work accomplished and also made it possible to evaluate the scope of the efforts made by the various peoples and by the Council. The Secretariat had been faced with an arduous task, for nothing could have been more difficult than to discover from among the abundant and frequently contradictory information the true aspects of each problem.

6. Several of the questions dealt with in the report were universal, for example, the rural exodus, which was of great importance for Uruguay, whose economy was largely based on agricultural production. In all countries those migrations were attributable to the difference in the levels of living between the cities and the country. In any attempt to prevent the rural areas from losing so many workers who were indispensable to their economic and social development, the first step must be to provide rural schools adapted to the environment in which they had to operate. While not neglecting any of the essential features of urban schools or the vocational aptitudes of the pupils, the education provided in such institutions should be designed to awaken in the children a sense of solidarity and social co-operation and a love for the land, and should also equip them technically as efficient rural workers capable of making progress. Migration from the rural areas to the cities could often be explained also by the fact that the city workers enjoyed material advantages which were denied to rural inhabitants. They were organized in powerful unions which would influence public opinion and create a state of mind favourable to the adoption of laws advantageous to them. Nothing of the sort existed in the rural communities. In Uruguay a great deal was being done to improve conditions for rural inhabitants. Missions of agronomists and veterinarians were providing them with technical help; public banks were offering them a great variety of credits and those who wished to buy land were benefiting from very advantageous prices.

7. Uruguay was interested in all aspects of social progress. In the larger cities construction and planning were controlled by special laws. Medical care was entirely free for the poorer classes. There was a very extensive network of hospitals and clinics, and mutual societies were highly developed. Destitute children received special attention, and one feature of particular value was the use of the Salario Social Infantil (Children's Allowance), which made it possible to preserve the unity of the family, avoiding the evil effects of separating children from their parents and also providing them with medical, hygienic, dietetic and educational supervision. The Tenth Pan American Child Congress, held at Panama, had made favourable mention of that institution.

8. Great progress had been made in social security. All Uruguayan workers were entitled to retire on a pension as soon as they had fulfilled certain minimum labour requirements, and those who retired after thirty or more years' service received special retirement bonuses. Bank pensions increased progressively in proportion to the salaries of employed workers. In the wool and meat-packing industries, the workers were assured of a certain number of hours of work in a given period. In the event of unemployment they received benefits from the compen-

sation funds. Co-operation between the National Low-Cost Housing Institute and the municipalities provided wider opportunities for the lower-income groups to find adequate housing, but the most important factor in that connexion was such legislation as the Apartment Ownership Act and the Act authorizing the Mortgage Bank to make long-term loans for the purchase or construction of houses, which had made it possible for more people to own their homes and was helping to remedy the housing shortage.

9. Collaboration between the State and private individuals in one typical aspect of community development was proceeding successfully in Uruguay. In every primary school there was an Improvement Board, consisting of teachers, parents and representative citizens of the district. In the secondary schools parent associations were supplementing the work of the State. In addition, the agricultural youth movement was playing an important role in education. Mention must also be made of the efforts to expand tourism, improve the organization of the police forces, combat disease and promote technical development. Close co-operation between the Government and the neighbourhood associations had made it possible to carry out important public works.

10. Uruguay had no illiteracy problem, for parents were required, under pain of severe penalties, to send their children to school at the age of six years. Public education was entirely free at all levels, from the primary to the highest. Although instruction in public schools was undenominational, religious communities had the right to open their own schools. The State merely saw to it that the curricula were identical throughout the country.

11. Referring briefly to the problem of narcotics control, he stated that the legislation of his country was very severe. He cordially congratulated the Government of Iran on having sacrificed economic interests to the social good in banning the production of opium.

12. Referring next to human rights, he declared that his people had always been deeply attached to the ideals of liberty and justice. That was proved by the welcome they offered to aliens, who enjoyed the same rights as Uruguayan citizens and could even, after three or five years, become naturalized, which allowed them access to most public offices. They were completely free to found schools in which instruction was given in their language, to publish newspapers and to organize unions. The Penal Code was in general less severe on them than on Uruguayan nationals.

13. Women enjoyed equality with men in respect of all rights guaranteed under the Constitution and the law, and in some respects their legal status was even more favourable.

14. In order to promote human rights throughout the world, international co-operation must be developed and efforts must be made to share the resources of the earth equitably among all peoples. It was regrettable that some peoples were still deprived of freedom because of tyrannical régimes that were trying to expand and were thus creating tension. Democracy meant peace, and Uruguay, which was proud of its long democratic tradition, was a peace-loving nation which wanted only to maintain excellent relations with all nations in the world.

15. Miss ADDAE (Ghana) warmly thanked the delegations that had welcomed her country. Ghana had participated in the activities of the Economic and Social Council even before attaining independence, and the gratitude that it felt towards the United Nations and the specialized agencies for the help it had received prompted it to do all in its power to contribute effectively to the common task.

16. The problems faced by the new States, whose number had increased, were worth study because of their special nature and the Committee could profit by their examination. It had been noted that a certain system of education in Africa had tended to educate graduates who preferred to look for posts in offices, which did not exist in sufficiently large numbers to satisfy all the applicants. The Government of Ghana was endeavoring to remedy that situation. One of the best ways to do that would be for the countries responsible for territories that were still dependant to call the attention of the populations to their historic past, their institutions, their cultural life and the difficulties that they might have to overcome. By that method really competent administrators would be trained.

17. Cultural relations were very important because they permitted different countries, especially the less developed countries, to assimilate elements from which they might profit in their development. It would be useful if those countries had at their disposal more abundant and detailed information and if economic and social studies were more thorough. The delegation of Ghana looked forward to the establishment in the near future of a regional economic commission for Africa, the work of which would be of great help to the countries and territories of the continent.

18. The representative of Ghana had much satisfaction in recalling that her country was one of the pioneers of the community development movement. The programmes that had been undertaken had not only permitted remarkable material achievements, but had also helped to develop the personal initiative and civic spirit of the urban and rural populations and enlarge their horizon. Ghana, together with its neighbours, was proceeding with useful exchanges of views on the experience gained.

19. When Ghana had attained its independence, the women of that country had already enjoyed certain rights for which they had not had to fight. The legislation was very advanced. Women occupied a privileged position and it was interesting to note that three-quarters of the retail trade was in their hands.

20. She called attention to the discriminatory measures to which Negroes had often fallen victim. Those practices were still a painful reality in certain countries and too much emphasis could not be placed on the importance and urgency of the efforts made by the United Nations to eliminate prejudice and discrimination. The delegation of Ghana gave its full support to the studies made in that field, and it hoped that the organization of the seminars mentioned in the Council's report (A/3613) would proceed rapidly.

21. In conclusion, the representative of Ghana emphasized that the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights would make the peoples of the entire world become more clearly aware of the immense importance of that event.

22. Mrs. BILAI (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) welcomed the representatives of Ghana and the Federation of Malaya, which were sitting in the Committee for the first time.

23. Discussing the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/3613), she noted that while progress had undoubtedly been made in the economic and social fields, there nevertheless existed a wide gap between the possibilities that science and technology offered for the improvement of the standard of living of human beings and the existing situation. Access to the immense cultural heritage of humanity had been refused to more than half the population of the world, which was deprived of the possibility of acquiring a basic education. One of the characteristics of the twentieth century was the irresistible movement towards the independence of countries that had formerly been victims of colonialist exploitation. It was not by chance that the majority of the territories that had been oppressed for a long time by colonialism were economically under-developed. The world was witnessing the efforts of those countries to get rid of the results of colonialism, to develop their national economy and culture and thus to increase the well-being of their populations. A certain number of young States had already accomplished appreciable progress and the Ukrainian SSR, which until recently had had to face similar problems, was sincerely glad of their success.

24. She could not agree with the reasons put forth in the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/3613) and in the Report of the World Social Situation (E/CN.5/324/Rev.1) in explaining the difficulties faced by under-developed countries. The unprecedented growth of the world population did not by any means appear to be the cause of the evils from which they suffered. Such an argument was intended rather to hide the real cause of economic and social backwardness in countries that had been subjected to, and were still subjected to, the colonialist yoke. No one could be ignorant of the fact that in a number of under-developed countries population density was less than in the majority of European countries. Moreover, the inexhaustible riches of the planet which could easily be developed at the current stage of scientific and technical knowledge provided favourable conditions for the social and material progress of all the peoples. Unfortunately, in many countries, influential circles serving the interests of powerful economic groups prevented the discoveries of science and technical knowledge from being put at the disposal of all human beings. The United Nations still had much to do in order to ensure an improvement in the standard of living of the populations for it depended largely on international co-operation. Unfortunately, however, co-operation was hindered by factors such as the "cold-war" policy, the armaments race, and the establishment of military blocs. It was deplorable that the Council had not insisted on the necessity of ending atomic tests, the terrible consequences of which had been pointed out in the Report of the World Social Situation.

25. The representative of the Ukrainian SSR wished to cite several examples of the accomplishments of her country, which had quickly overcome the backwardness from which it had suffered in economical and social matters. Until recently, the riches of the Ukraine had been exploited by capitalists of many countries; the Ukrainian people had been oppressed

and deprived of the possibility of developing their national culture; the teaching of the Ukrainian language had been officially prohibited. In the space of forty years and in spite of two devastating wars, the Ukrainian SSR had become one of the most advanced countries from the economic point of view. The production of electric energy was 65 times greater than in 1913 and the production of coal had increased 2.3 times. In 1917, only a quarter of the population could read and write; on the eve of the Second World War, illiteracy had completely disappeared. The Republic had 25,000 schools where teaching was given in Ukrainian and numerous establishments where instruction was given in other languages. The number of students in higher education was greater than in any other European country. Thus, thanks to socialism, the Ukrainian SSR had made progress the extent of which would have been inconceivable before the October revolution.

26. The Ukrainian delegation considered that the adoption of the Convention on the Political Rights of Women (General Assembly resolution 640 (VII)) and the adoption of the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women (General Assembly resolution 1040 (XI)) were important steps in the struggle against forms of discrimination to which women were still subjected. As long as the protection of motherhood was not ensured, as long as women did not possess all the rights enjoyed by men, it would be difficult to speak of progress in human rights. Under those conditions it was absolutely indispensable for the Commission on the Status of Women to pursue its efforts energetically.

27. The Ukrainian delegation supported without reservation the draft resolution submitted by Czechoslovakia (A/C.3/L.610). The Ukrainian SSR continued to enlarge its cultural, scientific, technical, artistic and athletic relations with other countries. In particular, tourist travel had expanded considerably.

28. Miss RADIC (Yugoslavia) expressed her delegation's satisfaction at the fact that the Committee had decided to give precedence to the examination of the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/3613) and hoped that that would become a regular practice. The Economic and Social Council was one of the most important of the United Nations organs, and the scope and range of the problems with which it had dealt during the past year were most impressive. The Social Commission in particular had carried out very useful work. The Report on the World Social Situation (E/CN.5/324/Rev.1), the report on community development (E/CN.5/325 and Corr.1 and Add.1), the recommendations for the improvement of levels of living (E/CN.5/321) and the Commission's work programme¹ were only a few of the items of great interest.

29. During its two preceding sessions, the Council had taken a number of decisions of wide practical significance. She wished to refer particularly to resolution 663 I (XXIV), on the development of personal contacts between specialists in social matters and resolution 643 (XXIII), which dealt with the problem of media of information in under-developed countries. Those examples showed that the Council was endeavouring,

¹/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Twenty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 9, annex II.

with increasing success, to promote the study of certain main aspects of social development. The same conclusion might be drawn from an examination of the Report on the World Social Situation, which, providing as it did a comprehensive view of social problems in the world today and showing that they were interdependent, was of the utmost value for all countries. Although the report dealt only with social problems, it did to some extent reflect the development of international relations, since in the last analysis the nature of such relations was determined by the interplay of economic and social factors. The immediate social problems dealt with in the report, for example population and urbanization, did not affect individual countries only, but the entire world; that was a point on which there was practically unanimous agreement. Therefore it was absolutely necessary that measures to solve those problems should be carried out on the international level. Much progress had already been made. The Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance was of great help in promoting the economic development of under-developed countries, and the action of the specialized agencies was becoming increasingly effective. Although the funds at the disposal of those organizations were relatively limited, they were extremely useful in encouraging the under-developed countries to exploit their own resources.

30. As those activities became more extensive and diversified, their co-ordination became more complex. The Council had taken up that question at its previous session, but it would be necessary to re-examine it.

31. In the opinion of the Yugoslav delegation, the United Nations had not as yet explored all the possibilities open to it of helping under-developed countries solve their economic and social problems. In addition to carrying out research work and studies, it should undertake more extensive programmes of practical action in the social field. The financial resources available for technical assistance would not be sufficient to enable it to do that. Other forms of financial aid within the framework of the United Nations would have to be created, for example, the Special United Nations Fund for Economic Development, of which many representatives had already spoken.

32. Unfortunately, it had been decided to postpone the publication of the next report on the world social situation to 1963. She hoped that that was only a provisional decision. The United Nations should guarantee, through its information centres, a wider circulation of studies of that type, so that the peoples of the highly-developed countries might be better informed regarding their countries' obligations.

33. With regard to community development, the people in Yugoslavia were already taking an active part in the political, economic and social life of their country. She instanced in that connexion the system of autonomous communes, the workers' management of factories and other economic undertakings and the social management of cultural, health and social institutions and organizations. Yugoslavia had obtained results of which it might well be proud. There were still a number of difficulties, but there was no doubt that its social system fully guaranteed progress in the country.

34. The Yugoslav delegation considered that the Commission on the Status of Women was doing very useful work, but that it might be to its advantage to

have more tangible achievements to its credit in the future, especially in the field of the economic rights of women, which were the very foundation of equality.

35. The Yugoslav delegation would support the draft resolution submitted by Czechoslovakia (A/C.3/L.610).

36. U KO KO GYI (Burma) commended the Secretary-General for the excellent Report on the World Social Situation (E/CN.5/324/Rev.1) which he had prepared in co-operation with the International Labour Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the World Health Organization. The United Nations, through its various organs, and particularly the Technical Assistance Administration, was carrying out its task in a manner worthy of the highest praise.

37. Urbanization, which was treated at length in the Report on the World Social Situation, was a problem with which Burma was much concerned, as were most of the under-developed countries. The rural exodus had many unfavourable consequences, both for the migrants themselves and for the cities in which they settled. People from villages generally had a great deal of difficulty in setting up a new system of values. The stabilizing influence of the family was weakened; that of the community, which was so strong in the villages, no longer existed, and many young migrants drifted into juvenile delinquency, particularly as migrant families could usually find housing only in the slum areas. The situation was further aggravated by the fact that very often a migrant could not find employment and was obliged to resort to means of livelihood which were not always lawful.

38. Those problems were not insoluble, however, and Burma, convinced that community development could promote good results both in cities and rural areas, had undertaken two projects in the two suburban areas of Rangoon, where migrants had settled after the Second World War; the results obtained were very encouraging.

39. The Burmese delegation had read the report on community development (E/CN.5/325 and Corr.1 and Add.1) with great interest and considered that it would be useful to give a brief account of what its country had done in that field.

40. The Burmese community development programme had originated in the Mass Education Scheme, inaugurated in 1948. The training of personnel was undertaken at a centre at Rangoon. The training course, which had originally been a six months' course, now lasted for one year, and the Centre could accommodate 200 men and 100 women; fourteen neighbouring villages were used as a social laboratory. The method of action was the following: the mass education organizers, also called multi-purpose community workers, started by establishing community centres in selected areas. Each centre covered an area of about five miles and served a few thousand people. Two or three community workers, including one woman worker, were assigned to each centre. There were by now over 300 centres, covering close to 2,000 villages. The centres organized adult education classes, extended school facilities, improved village sanitation, formed co-operative societies, improved agricultural production and promoted cottage industries; they also

encouraged self-help activities. Community workers were aided in their work by all related government departments.

41. In 1954, Burma had also undertaken a pilot project at Payagyi in Pegu district, under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Affairs. The project aimed at an intensive and total development of a rural community in all aspects of its economic, social and cultural life through self-help and the provision of government services. The project comprised forty-seven villages with a population of 37,000 and nearly thirty government agencies and public bodies were participating in it. The results obtained had been so satisfactory that the Government of Burma had undertaken a similar project in the Meiktila district.

42. The Burmese representative wished to express his delegation's gratitude to the United Nations for the assistance which it had given his country in that field. In 1955, following the suggestion of the United Nations social welfare adviser in Burma, the Government of Burma had organized a three-day seminar on the

Payagyi project, in which more than eighty representatives and observers from the United Nations, the specialized agencies and various governmental departments and educational institutions had participated. The seminar had made it possible to clarify the principles and objectives of community development and to further the co-ordination of national and international efforts.

43. In view of the interest taken by the Burmese delegation in community development, that delegation was of the opinion that the United Nations should continue its work in that field and commended the Economic and Social Council for its adoption of a resolution (resolution 663 D (XXIV)) containing specific recommendations.

44. With regard to women's rights, the Burmese representative stated that the laws and traditions of his country had for a very long time granted women equal rights with men.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.